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The Clipper Visits Bart Bradley

By NANCY McCAFFERTY



Bartlett Bradley

fice for 16 years. During his tenure Bradley came to enjoy the job and became comfortable with it, although he does admit that during the first few years he felt uneasy. His determination to do "the best job I could" served him and the town well.

Then as now, the town held one general meeting, usually with 2 special meetings a year. The Water Department was a separate entity called the Duxbury Water and Fire Districts, which held their own annual meeting. Later, of course, these departments were amalgamated into the town. There was also a required quorum, something Bradley is against, and was later dropped as a requirement for a town meeting. He recalls that people had to phone various establishments where groups would be gathered and ask the people to come and register at the town meeting being held so the quorum could be met. The people would come, sign in, then leave. Bradley says other towns experienced similar events. After the quorum rule was abolished, Bradley says attendance at town meetings improved, although to this day it does not reflect the town population. "It was an interesting bit of psychology," he said. "When the quorum was in effect, people tended to think 'Why should I go? Someone else will do it. There's a quorum to be met.' But when the quorum was eliminated, people thought they'd better take the responsibility to attend the meetings if only to protect their own interests." **There is a move afoot to restore the quorum rule regarding town meetings, and the logic in it baffles Bradley. "I don't know why anyone would support the quorum," he said.**

Bradley's father, Harry B. Bradley, was also the town moderator for 16 years, from 1934 to 1950. Both father and son serving the same number of years wasn't by design. "It just worked out that way," said Bradley. When questioned as to what the ultimate population of Duxbury would be, this interesting quote is attributed to Harry B. Bradley:

for its upkeep and the hiring of personnel. The north beach was made public and the rest was reserved for Duxbury residents, or those who purchase beach stickers every year. According to the Duxbury Beach Reservation, Inc., bylaws, profits made must be plowed back into benefits for the beach. The organization is forbidden by its own choice to make money from the town's use of the land. Now, of course, the question arises, "What right did 6 or 7 people have to own a beach, even if it is in a town trust?" It must be remembered that the trust allows for the town's control and preservation of the beach for the benefit of Duxbury's citizens. Also consider this: Were it not protected by this trust, what would stop developers from crowding that fragile and beautiful strip with houses from the bridge to the Gurnet, complete with a 2-lane black-topped highway running through the middle? If anyone remembers Cape Cod's small towns 20 or 25 years ago and compared some of them in their peaceful beauty then with the crowded conditions and overabundance of motels now, one can see how things can change. Without foresight and planning, it could have happened here. Controls do not always mean denial of individual rights; it can also mean preservation of the natural beauty that attracts people to an area in the first place.

Another of Bradley's interests is in the Duxbury Free Library. This is a private board of 7 people which initially managed the town's library with private funds. As the town grew and the budgets increased, the board found itself in the position of having to ask the town to supplement its funds. Eventually, this led to the management of the library being taken over by the town and having a public board elected. The current fiscal year's budget for the library is \$202,043. However, the Duxbury Free Library is still an important part of the town's betterment of the library. Each year...

hats. Since 1976 he has been the Veterans Agent for Duxbury, but that is only a part of his services to the town. From 1954 to 1970 he was the town moderator. He is an active member of the Duxbury Free Library, Inc., the Duxbury Beach Reservation, Inc., and treasurer of the Partridge Academy Scholarship Fund.

As Veterans Agent, Bradley is responsible for providing financial and medical assistance to eligible veterans. Eligibility for benefits requires that the vet be honorably discharged, have served in the military during wartime, and have a real financial need. Not to be confused with the Veterans Administration, Bradley's office is one of 360 connected to the Massachusetts Veterans Services, a state organization. Typical of the cases he handles is the person who is currently unemployed, has exhausted his unemployment benefits, and is without medical insurance when he or a member of his family becomes ill and needs treatment. Most people do not remain in that position. "They come and go," said Bradley. "As soon as they get a job, they are off the rolls."

At the outbreak of World War II Bradley was with the Plymouth Cordage Co., a firm whose primary product was Mexican sisal (rope fiber). Inducted into the service, he was a navy lieutenant and was sent to Washington, D.C., to buy rope. "It made me mad. If we had to be in a war, I might as well be IN the war. If I had to be in the service, I wanted to be in the navy. I wanted a ship," he said. Bradley got his wish. He traveled the Pacific with the APA assault transports, part of the Amphibious Corps whose job it was to carry troops to landings. Asked if he had been in any of the big battles, Bradley smiled and said, "I went everywhere in the Pacific, but was conveniently behind the major action." After the war, Bradley continued with the Plymouth Cordage Co., retiring as vice president of the Columbian Rope Co., which had earlier bought out the Plymouth firm.

His first election as town moderator was a position he neither sought nor campaigned for. "I was out of town at the time," he said. Bradley was elected by sticker vote, similar to a write-in and confesses to being "scared to death of the job" and was fearful that he wouldn't do it properly. The voters disagreed with him and kept him in that of-

ultimate population of Duxbury could get to 4,000."

In comparing Duxbury then with Duxbury now, Bradley says, "It is basically a bigger business. We have a budget of 10 or 12 million dollars now. Then 1 million was a lot. There were 13 in my Partridge Academy graduating class. Now there are at least 250 students graduating from DHS. The population grew but the problems are the same. The school is the big expense along with highways, water, and police. All have grown as the town has grown."

The biggest problem, according to Bradley, and the biggest credit to town government because of the way in which it was handled, is population growth. The growth was foreseen, and measures such as zoning laws and building codes were enacted to protect the town from becoming an ugly urban sprawl. Other towns have not been so fortunate. "When I grew up here, it was mostly woodland. Now there are some lovely developments. The way in which the land was cared for is our biggest asset," he said.

Stewardship of the land is a major role of Duxbury Beach Reservation, Inc. Bradley is a member of this organization and provided a brief history. The strip of land known as Duxbury Beach was owned by 6 or 7 individuals whose original intent was to preserve its beauty and yet make it available to Duxbury residents. In what can only be described as an altruistic move, these individuals eventually put the land into a town trust. The beach is leased by the town each year and the town is responsible

up to \$20,000 and in many cases can fill a need which the town budget cannot afford. The board remains constant at 7 members and its driving force is "to make the library better still."

Bradley attended Duxbury schools, including Partridge Academy (which was the town's high school) before going to Dartmouth and graduating in 1929. It seems only natural that he should be involved in an educational facet of Duxbury's students. Bradley said that when he went to Dartmouth fellows would ask his class rank in high school. "I'd tell them I was ranked number one and was the valedictorian of my class. It was impressive until they asked how many graduated with me and I had to tell them 13." Partridge Academy has long since burned down, but its effects remain felt in the form of a scholarship fund. Bradley is treasurer of the Partridge Academy Scholarship Fund which has been in existence for over 100 years. George Partridge's will left \$10,000 for the specific use of adding to the educational opportunities of Duxbury's children. In those days, it was assumed that he probably meant high school and so Partridge Academy was built on the site of the present town hall. When it burned in the late 20s, there was money left not only from the will, but from the eventual sale of the land. That amount today produces \$7,000-\$8,000 a year. Private contributions are also given so that each year a Duxbury student receives \$1200 for each of 4 years of college. This means that the scholarship fund has 4 students receiving money every year each at \$1200. If there is anything left after these obligations are fulfilled, the fund will sponsor "one shot deals" of \$1000 here and \$1000 there. "We spend it all," said Bradley. It is hoped that the students who benefit from these scholarships and those who know what the fund's purpose is will contribute to it or assist in some way.

Bart Bradley deserves a tip of the hat. In an age when people are so busy with their own lives that they often forget or think they haven't the time for volunteer work or service to a town in which they live, it is refreshing to find a man who has done so much.